

and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 6897 of May 17, 1996**

**National Safe Boating Week, 1996**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Each year, more Americans choose recreational boating as a means of appreciating our Nation's scenic lakes, beautiful rivers, and vast ocean waterways. Boating is a leisure activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities, offering a unique perspective on an unparalleled variety of natural landscapes. This pastime is not without risk, however, and a thorough knowledge of water safety techniques and equipment is an essential part of being a responsible boater.

Studies show that in more than 77 percent of the fully documented recreational boating fatalities that occur every year, the victim was not wearing a life jacket. Falling overboard and capsizing are the leading causes of these deaths, and more than half of all boating accidents are alcohol-related—facts that clearly illustrate the importance of not mixing alcohol and boating, and of properly using personal flotation devices. Skippers, crew members, passengers, and all those who participate in nautical sports should wear safety equipment every time they take to the water.

I commend the United States Coast Guard and the many State and local recreational boating organizations that are working with Government agencies and volunteers across the country to promote the use of life jackets and to educate the public about other lifesaving measures. As we look forward to the summer months and spending time with family and friends on America's waterways, such efforts are vital to ensuring our citizens' health and safety.

In recognition of the value of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 161), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the seven day period prior to the Memorial Day Weekend as "National Safe Boating Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 18 through May 24, 1996, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion. I urge all Americans to practice safe boating habits during this week and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON